



United States Department of Agriculture

RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE
www.ars.usda.gov

"Solving Problems for the Growing World"

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Announcement Number: ARS-X5E-0350
Demo/Alternative Merit
Promotion

Number of Vacancies: 2

Position Title/Series/Grade:
National Program Leader for Horticulture

Biological Scientist, GS-0401-14/15

Promotion Potential: GS-15

Employment Type: Full-time - Permanent

Grade and Salary Range:

GS-14	\$ 88,369.00 - \$114,882.00 Per Year
GS-15	\$103,947.00 - \$135,136.00 Per Year

Location of Position: Agricultural Research Service,
National Programs, Crops Production and Protection,
Beltsville, MD

Who Can Apply: All U.S. Citizens

Opening Date: September 19, 2005

Closing Date: November 14, 2005

For copies of vacancy announcements and/or application materials, please call (301) 504-1482. For additional information regarding employment opportunities, please visit <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/jobs/apply.htm>.

Contact Information

Human Resources Specialist:
Mary Ann Becker
(301) 504-1350

DC Relay Service: (202) 855-1234 (TDD)

Send Applications to:
USDA, Agricultural Research Service
Human Resources Division
Attn: Mary Ann Becker
5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Stop 5104
Beltsville, MD 20705-5104
Fax: (301) 504-1535
E-mail: scirecruit@ars.usda.gov

Applications must be postmarked, e-mailed or faxed by the closing date of the announcement. Applications received in Government envelopes will not be considered.

Please take advantage of the Application Package Checklist at the end of this announcement to ensure your application is complete.

For information about the organization and location, visit the location's website at
<http://www.ars.usda.gov/research/programs.htm>.

Applications will also be accepted from USDA Surplus and Federal Displaced Employees in the commuting area.

This position has a positive education requirement and requires U.S. citizenship.

Education completed outside the U.S. must be submitted for evaluation to a private organization that specializes in interpretation of foreign educational credentials and such education must be deemed at least equivalent to that gained in conventional U.S. education programs.

Major Duties:

These positions are located in Crop Production and Protection, National Programs, Agricultural Research Service (ARS). The ARS mission involves problem-solving research and technology transfer in the widely diverse food and agricultural sciences to ensure high-quality, safe food, and other agricultural products; to assess the nutritional needs of Americans; to sustain a competitive agricultural economy; to enhance the natural resource base and the environment; and to provide economic opportunities for rural citizens, communities, and society as a whole.

Incumbent will serve as the National Program Leader for Horticulture and Sugar Crops or as the National Program Leader for Horticulture, Pathogens and Germplasm. The National Program Leader is the focal point for national strategic planning and policy analysis for the National Programs of the Agency. Incumbent performs the following duties:

Leads and coordinates the agricultural research programs in the fields of horticulture, botany, plant physiology, plant pathology, and genetics and related disciplines such as molecular biology and biotechnology. Guides, and facilitates planning activities for mid- to long-range problem-solving programs and projects which implement emerging Agency policy. Coordinates multidisciplinary planning within ARS and between ARS and other Federal and State agencies as well as academic institutions, private industry, and when appropriate, foreign governments and international organizations.

Adapts new planning techniques and approaches for agricultural research. Participates as a leader or member of interdisciplinary planning teams charged with administering the Agency's national programs. Works with line managers nationwide to assure that strategic and implementation plans reflect national priorities and policies and operate effectively. Establishes and maintains communication with ARS research leaders and non-ARS research organizations.

Identifies the need for and plans and carries out national workshops and planning conferences. Serves as the Agency's technical expert for assigned area and advises ARS administrators on emerging issues, such as global trends, technologies, economics, markets, environment, threats to agricultural productivity and consumer safety, social and political trends, and new technologies and research needs. Performs program evaluation activities and participates in Agency budget presentations.

Working Conditions and Other Considerations:

Position requires travel.

Qualifications Required: Your education and experience will be evaluated against all qualification requirements (basic and any additional requirements) listed below.

Basic Requirements

Biological Scientist Series (GS-0401): Degree: biological sciences, agriculture, natural resources management, chemistry, or related disciplines appropriate to the position; OR a combination of education and experience - courses equivalent to a major, as shown above, plus appropriate experience or additional education. For more details about qualification requirements, go to: <http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/sec-iii/a/0400-NDX.HTM>. PhD is desirable.

This position has a positive education requirement. You must provide a copy of your academic transcripts OR a list of college courses with credit hours, dates completed, and grades received to verify education when applying for this position. If this information is not provided, your

education may not be appropriately evaluated, and you may lose consideration for this position. If you are selected for this position, you will have to provide an official copy of your transcripts prior to entering on duty.

**Education completed outside the U.S. must be submitted for evaluation to a private organization that specializes in interpretation of foreign educational credentials and such education must be deemed at least equivalent to that gained in conventional U.S. education programs. The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation may be of some help in providing information on these organizations. For a listing of organizations, go to:
<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/jobs/foreign.htm>**

Additional Requirements:

GS-14: Candidates must possess one year of specialized experience equivalent to the GS-13 level in the Federal service.

GS-15: Candidates must possess one year of specialized experience equivalent to the GS-14 level in the Federal service.

Time-In-Grade Restrictions apply for all candidates considered under Merit Promotion/Alternative Merit Promotion.

Specialized Experience - experience which has equipped you with the following Knowledge, Skills and Abilities - 'KSAs' required to perform the duties of this position:

1. Knowledge of theories, principles, concepts and methods of horticulture, botany, plant physiology, plant pathology, and genetics and related disciplines such as molecular biology and biotechnology in order to develop innovative agricultural research programs.
2. Ability to plan, coordinate and evaluate research programs (including multi-disciplinary programs), and to interpret and document research findings.
3. Skill in using administrative and management principles to establish goals and priorities and assess and assign resources required to accomplish programmatic goals.
4. Ability to develop and maintain cooperative research programs, such as those with other Federal agencies, State agencies, colleges and universities, and professional societies and associations.
5. Ability to organize, lead, and chair groups of technical experts.

Your education and experience will be evaluated against the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) as outlined under specialized experience. A specific response to the requirements outlined under specialized experience is highly recommended to ensure adequate consideration in the evaluation process.

Other Important Information

Benefits Package:

A Benefits Package is authorized for this position. Additional information about Federal benefits can be obtained at www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei61.htm.

Veteran's Preference:

For further details, call the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) at 478-757-3000 or TDD 478-744-2299. Select General Information on the Federal Employment Policies and Procedures, and then Veterans Preference and Special Appointing Authorities for Veterans. Visit their VetGuide website at <http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp>.

Relocation Expenses:

Payment of relocation expenses will be determined in accordance with P&P 412.5, Recruitment and Retention Incentives and Other Special Pay, Sections 6 and 7, as amended by Bulletin 03-402, which may be found at: <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/index.htm>.

Financial Disclosure Requirement:

Federal employees are subject to prohibitions against officially dealing with outside organizations in which they have a financial interest. If hired for this position, you will be required to submit a financial disclosure report within 30 days of the effective date of your appointment and annually thereafter.

False statements:

If you make a false statement in any part of your application, you may not be hired; may be fired after beginning work; or may be fined or jailed.

Optional Form 306, (Declaration for Federal Employment):

If you are selected for this position, you will be required to complete this form before an offer may be made.

USDA Surplus/Federal Displaced Employees:

USDA Surplus/Federal displaced employees must submit documentary evidence of eligibility. Well qualified surplus and displaced employees within the local commuting area will receive selection priority as provided by OPM regulations. Well-qualified means the applicant meets the basic qualification and eligibility requirements and all selective placement factors; is rated above minimally qualified against the KSAs or quality criteria; and is able to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position upon entry. Applicants must submit the following:

- 1) a copy of your RIF Separation Notice or Certification of Expected Separation or other documentation indicating that you are a surplus employee;
- 2) evidence of full performance level of current position;
- 3) a copy of your most recent performance appraisal; and
- 4) a copy of your most recent SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action, to verify reassignment eligibility.

Selective Service System:

Males over age 18 who were born after December 31, 1959, must have registered with the Selective Service System (or have an exemption) to be eligible for Federal employment.

Reasonable Accommodation:

Reasonable accommodation is provided to applicants with disabilities. If you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process, or have questions regarding reasonable accommodation and/or accessibility for any part of the application and hiring process, please contact the Disability Program Manager on 202-720-6161 or through the DC Relay Service on 202-855-1234 (TDD). The decision to grant reasonable accommodation is made on a case-by-case basis.

Civil Rights Policy Statement:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

Discrimination is prohibited in all USDA programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's Target Center on 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice and TDD).

Application Package Checklist

If application packages do not contain all of the requested information, you may lose consideration for the job. To help you ensure your application fully outlines your qualifications and eligibility for this position, please submit the following documentation.

- ☐ Optional Form 612 (Optional Application for Federal Employment), SF-171 (Application for Federal Employment), Resume, Curriculum Vitae, or other document outlining your qualifications (Go to <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.asp> and scroll down to obtain the OF-612)

The following information is required of all applicants:

- ☐ Announcement number, title, and grade(s) of the position
- ☐ Full name, mailing address (including zip code) and day and evening phone numbers (with area code)
- ☐ Social security number
- ☐ Statement that you are a U.S. citizen (if not using the OF-612 or SF-171)
- ☐ Copy of DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) (if claiming veterans preference) (Visit <http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp> for additional information)
- ☐ SF-15 (Application for 10-point Veteran's Preference) plus the support documentation required by this form (if claiming 10-point veterans preference) (Go to the web site at <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/sf.asp> to obtain form.)
- ☐ Paid and non-paid work experience related to the position. For each period of work experience include:
 - ___ Job title
 - ___ Series/grade (if Federal employment)
 - ___ Duties and accomplishments
 - ___ Employer's name and address
 - ___ Supervisor's name and contact information
 - ___ Starting and ending dates of employment (at least month & year)
 - ___ Number of hours worked per week
 - ___ Salary
 - ___ Indicate if we may contact current supervisor/employer
- ☐ Other job related information, such as training courses (title & year); skills (e.g., other languages, computer software/hardware, tools, etc.)
 - ___ Certificates/licenses (current)
 - ___ Honors, awards, and special accomplishments
 - ___ Supplemental questionnaire if applicable (usually for Federal Wage System positions - WG, WL, WS)
- ☐ Copy of college transcripts (if qualifying all or in part on the basis of education for this position) (If you have non-conventional education, e.g., foreign study, continuing education units, life experience, etc., go to the web site at <http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/SEC-II/s2-e4.htm#e4a> and look under the heading "Other Education" for information governing acceptability of this type of education.)

- ☐ Copy of SF-50 (Notification of Personnel Action) to verify possession of competitive civil service status (if you are a current or previous federal employee)
- ☐ Copy of most recent performance appraisal (if you are a current federal employee)
- ☐ Second copy of application package (if the position is open to candidates outside the federal government AND if you are a current federal employee or a candidate with reinstatement eligibility and wish to be considered under both merit promotion and competitive examining procedures)
- ☐ Support documentation for eligibility for special hiring authorities, such as disability, Peace Corps service, etc. (If you have questions about whether you are eligible for a particular hiring authority, please call the servicing HR specialist or visit the web site at <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/a2.htm> and scroll down to the subject heading, "Category".)
- ☐ Support documentation if you are a USDA surplus or federal displaced employee (See pertinent section under "Other Important Information" below.)
- ☐ Self-certification of typing speed (if required as a basic qualification for the position)
- ☐ While not required, a separate response to the required knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs listed under Specialized Experience) and Selective Placement Factor(s), if present, for this position may better highlight your specific qualifications for this position. (For an explanation of KSAs, go to the web site at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/careers/whatksa.html>).

If this is your first time applying for a federal job, or if you wish to view more detailed information about various aspects of applying for federal jobs, go to <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.asp> and scroll down to access the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Optional Form 510.